

**District Review Report
Final**

School District No. 73 (Kamloops/Thompson)

April 14 – 16, 2003

Submitted to the Minister of Education

By District Review Team Chair
Chris Kelly, Superintendent, School District No. 38 (Richmond)



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District Name:	Kamloops/Thompson
District Number:	73
Superintendent:	Dr. Terrence Sullivan
Date of Visit:	April 14 -16, 2003
Team Chair:	Chris Kelly, Superintendent of Schools, SD 38(Richmond)
Team Members:	Nancy Brennan, Principal SD 37 (Delta) Jim Cambridge, Principal SD 62 (Sooke) Paul Carriere, Principal SD 6 (Rocky Mountain) Sue Chambers, Teacher SD 6 (Rocky Mountain) Lindy Jones, Assistant Superintendent SD 42 (Maple Ridge) Linda Kaser, Ministry of Education Dineen Manuel, Parent, SD 74 (Gold Trail) Sue Spalding, Secondary Counselor SD 82 (Coast Mountains) Renee Wentland, Ministry of Education

Context

The purpose of this District Review is to provide feedback and recommendations to School District No. 73, Kamloops/Thompson, the Ministry of Education and the public regarding the district's work in improving student achievement. To this end, the Review:

- reviewed district and school achievement data,
- reviewed the District Accountability Contract and school plans to improve student achievement,
- recorded findings and made recommendations to the Board and the Minister regarding improving student achievement; and,
- identified promising practices which may assist other districts and schools in their efforts to improve student achievement.

School District No. 73 (Kamloops/Thompson) is a district of 16,000 K-12 students enrolled in 55 schools in a wide variety of communities, rural and urban, located in the Thompson/Okanagan region of British Columbia. Included among the student population and communities served by the District are seven First Nations bands. The District is currently experiencing a significant decline in student enrolment due largely to economic changes within the region.

For many years, this District has operated with an expressed commitment to, and emphasis on the improvement of student achievement. This is clearly reflected in the statements of mission and goals of the Board of School Trustees; a district which is "working together for quality public education". As are others in the province, this year this Board is making its transition, organizationally, to incorporate Ministry planning and reporting requirements within district- and school-based processes and structures which are directed towards the improvement of student achievement.

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Summary of Process

Activities of the Review:

In advance of visiting the district, the Team was provided documentation relevant to the review's purpose.

On the first morning of the Review, the Team was presented with a detailed overview of the District's work towards improving student achievement which included in-depth information relevant to the ten areas of inquiry which form the main framework for this report. This presentation was attended by trustees, representatives of stakeholder groups, district staff and school administrators.

During the remainder of its time in the District, the Team visited, interviewed School Planning Council members as well as other members of the school community, and reviewed improvement plans in seventeen schools throughout the district, including:

- Arthur Hatton Elementary
- Barriere Secondary
- Chase Secondary
- Clearwater Secondary
- Dufferin Elementary
- Haldane Elementary
- John Peterson Secondary
- Juniper Ridge Elementary
- Lloyd George Elementary
- Logan Lake Secondary
- Pinantan Elementary
- Raft River Elementary
- Ralph Bell Elementary
- Summit Elementary
- Valleyview Secondary
- Vavenby Elementary
- Westsyde Secondary

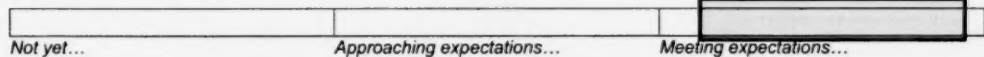
The Team also met with members of the First Nations Education Council

At the conclusion of its visit, the Team presented an overview of its findings and recommendations to district and school personnel.

Observations in Key Areas - Focus on Student Achievement

1. Goals:

Improving districts have a strong instructional focus. This focus is made visible in clear goals for improving student learning.



- Both district and school goals have a strong instructional focus and are based on evidence in the areas of Literacy, Numeracy, First Nations achievement and Social Responsibility.
- Long term Board goals are directly linked to improving student learning in each school and the District as a whole.

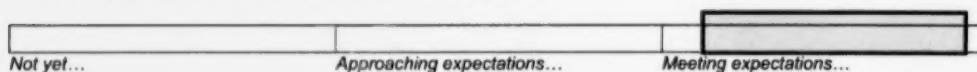
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- School goals align with the District's long term goals of improving student achievement.
- Goals stem from well-established district processes concentrating on student achievement.
- Most schools visited have specifically defined goals that are targeting identified areas for improvement.

2. Rationale:

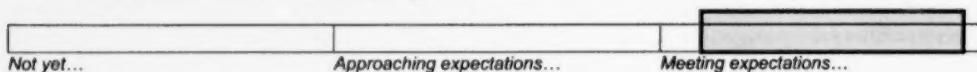
Improving districts have a thorough and connected set of reasons based on evidence for the selection of their student achievement goals.



- The District has thorough, connected sets of reasons for the identification of improvement goals.
- Rationale for goals is clearly and directly based on evidence that stems from a long-term, well-established practice of gathering and monitoring information on student performance.
- Rationale for goals reflects broad input from a variety of sources including survey information, performance data, and parent and community contributions.
- Most schools can clearly articulate the rationale as to how goals were developed from their data.

3. Data:

Improving districts are actively considering at least three sources of evidence including classroom, school and district / provincial data. The analysis of this evidence has informed the selection of the district goals.



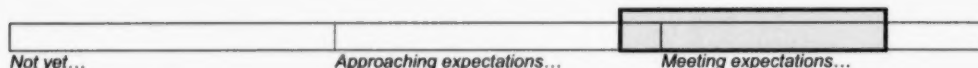
- The District has created a culture and system of data-based decision-making.
- Data sources are comprehensive and highly developed.
- The District has established expectations, and provided a framework for schools to utilize data in the formation of improvement plans.
- Data are regularly and broadly used as the basis for all decisions concerning the district's improvement plans.
- The District and schools are skilled in gathering and analyzing data in order to monitor and improve all students' achievement.
- Data is disaggregated and then used to help plan for and address specific issues.

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4. Strategies:

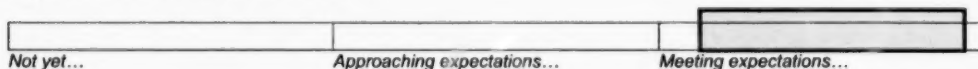
Improving districts have a well-organized, focused improvement plan in place. The strategies selected to achieve the goals are an intelligent blend of research, best practice, and innovative thinking.



- District strategies are grounded in sound research and a knowledge of effective practice. They are inclusive of all interests and needs among the students of the district.
- The District has effective strategies for improvement. Strong examples include literacy and First Nations plans, K-12.
- Strategies are characteristically pro-active rather than remedial in addressing specific areas of improvement.
- In the majority of cases, school-based strategies are comprehensive, multi-faceted and well integrated within school processes and practices.
- Most schools have strong instructional strategies in place, while others are progressing and may need support.

5. Structures:

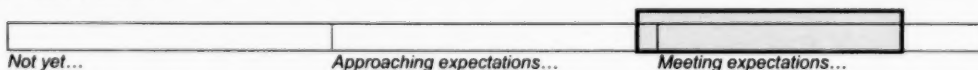
Improving districts have aligned structures – resources, time, organizations – to get the results they want. This includes effectively differentiating resources in the areas of highest need for improvement.



- District resources, both human and material, are carefully and thoughtfully aligned with a central, overall focus on improving student achievement.
- The District is continuously re-organizing and re-focusing its available resources to maximize student achievement.
- Despite severe budget reductions, the District assigns available funds in direct support of improvement goals and accompanying strategies.

6. Results:

Improving districts get improved student learning results – at the classroom, school and district levels.



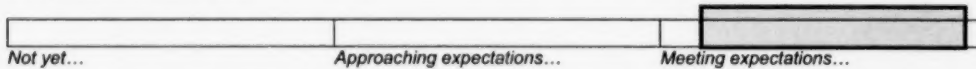
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- At the district level, student performance results are monitored annually to determine whether or not improvement has occurred. Schools are presently developing ways to monitor student performance on an ongoing basis.
- Evidence indicates the District is improving student achievement in a number of areas.

7. Communication:

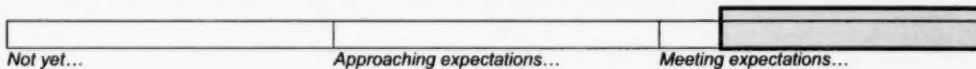
Improving districts communicate and make public their improvement goals and the progress being made.



- Communication is a strong and highly developed priority for the district.
- The District makes regular, effective use of annual reports, public surveys, public meetings, committee processes, its website and local media to promote and maintain effective communication throughout its various communities.
- Communication is thorough, clear, honest and well-focused on the central priority of improving student achievement.

8. Teamwork: District and School Coherence

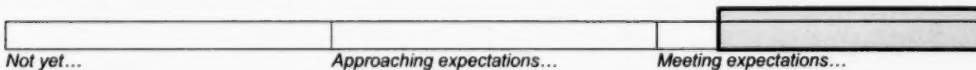
Improving districts have a dynamic and interactive strategy for connecting school and district goals. School uniqueness and school district directions are both valued.



- District and school coherence is extraordinarily strong. School and district goals and processes are compatible.
- The high level of district and school coherence is a result of a long term and consistent focus on the central importance of improving student achievement.
- Support from the District for school-based goals is consistent. Resources are allocated as necessary.
- Schools are free to pursue their goals and innovations.

9. Teamwork: District and Parent Involvement

Improving districts work as a team with parents, including specific groups of parents, on improving student learning.



- It is evident that parents are regularly and meaningfully involved in providing input, identifying goals and reflecting on the progress of the District. Parents are highly involved in examining data and setting goals as part of the School Planning Councils.

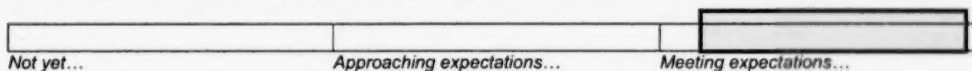
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- There is strong and well-developed involvement of parents in the work, processes and priorities of the District. This is extraordinarily evident in the teamwork the District has established with First Nations parents, communities and the First Nations Education Council.

10. Leadership / Teamwork:

Improving districts are led by district leaders with a clear vision for and commitment to school improvement and improving student achievement. Principals, vice principals, teacher, parent and student leadership is encouraged and systematically developed – with a focus on improving student learning.



- The importance of shared leadership in achieving district and school goals is clearly recognized, supported and developed by the District.
- District leaders' vision of, and commitment to, the improvement of student achievement are clear and uncompromising. District leaders clearly work as a team and complement one another in their skills, interests and fulfillment of responsibilities.
- School leadership is extremely strong and well-focused on the improvement of student achievement.
- The encouragement and promotion of leadership is characteristic of the culture of the district.

Strengths

Overall, the District has a proactive orientation to improvement and a well-developed ability to move to action quickly in response to new directions or change. This reflects a culture characterized by determination, resourcefulness and proactive, positive problem-solving.

There is a well-established and highly developed overall district focus on assessment and improvement. Operationally, the District's capacity for gathering and utilizing data is highly developed. Within this capacity is a significant readiness and ability to disaggregate data in order to identify specific areas for intervention and improvement.

The empowerment of people to serve the improvement of student achievement is evident generally throughout the system. There is a strong confidence in, and encouragement of each person's resourcefulness and ability in serving the cause of improving student achievement. Consequently, there is an inordinately strong and positive resolve on the part of personnel throughout the District to embrace challenges and seize opportunities in the pursuit of the improvement of student achievement.

The District's focus on the improvement of First Nations students' achievement is extremely well-developed and positive in its effect. The District is setting an important standard for working with, and for, First Nations people.

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The District's history in implementing strategies indicates the presence of a strong infrastructure in place to create positive changes in student learning identified in the future. The positive orientation of parents towards becoming involved in School Planning Councils, and in schools in general is a strength of the district. The level and caliber of parent involvement is high. The progress of School Planning Councils in identifying proposed goals and plans for improvement is commendable.

Promising Practices

Practices observed in this district which could be helpful to other districts include:

- The Kindergarten survey and Graduate Exit survey;
- District data templates for gathering school based data;
- Innovative partnerships such as the University College of the Cariboo Research Chair – Early Intervention;
- Student presentations on school goals at the beginning of each board meeting;
- Publication of a First Nations Annual Report and the nature and scope of working relationships with First Nations communities.
- The statement of connection to District Goals on the School Improvement template;
- The formation of Trustee committees to review School Improvement Plans with School Planning Councils pursuant to recommended approval by the Board.

Recommendations

Recommendations for strengthening the efforts of the District and its schools in improving student achievement include:

- Sustain and build upon the strong practices already in place to improve student achievement;
- Continue to provide "coaching" support to those schools who are at early stages of setting goals and developing specific, supporting strategies. To this end, build upon the best practices already evident in the majority of schools in the district;
- Look for innovative ways to facilitate and improve communication with schools in outlying areas. Create further opportunities for teachers in outlying areas to participate in district in-service and meetings;
- Continue to encourage and foster the use of performance standards (K-12) in each of the district goal areas (literacy, numeracy and social responsibility);
- Pursue the integration of school goals (i.e. literacy, numeracy, social responsibility) into all subject areas, K-12.

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Follow Up (to be determined by Ministry of Education)
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Required follow up with specific time frame may take the form of:

- Ministry phone call
- Deputy Minister visit
- District report to the Ministry
- Review of the next year's district contract
- Special Advisor appointment